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ON THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL.

A LETTER BY ELDER JESSE HAVEN,

One of the Presidents of the Seventies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and President of the Mission at the Cape of Good Hope; written to his Brother, Rev. John Haven, Pastor of the Congregational Church in the Town of Charlton, Worcester County, State of Massachusetts, United States of America.

Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope,
September, 1853.

DEAR BROTHER,

As you profess to be a minister of the Gospel, and teach the way of salvation to mankind; permit me to call your attention to the words of St. Paul, which you will find recorded in his epistle to the Galatians, chap. i. vers 8: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Now, dear brother, as you and I both profess to be ministers of the Gospel, having knowledge to point out to the sinner what he must do to be saved; let us take the bible and examine, and see what kind of a Gospel Paul and the Apostles preached, for fear we may preach a different Gospel, and the curse that Paul speaks of, rest upon us.

You certainly will admit, that Paul and the rest of the Apostles preached the same Gospel that Christ preached, and the Gospel they preached was approved of God. You will also admit (as you are a believer in the bible), that God is an unchangeable being. He has said in Malachi iii. 6: "For I am the

Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Also in Heb. xiii. 8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Having then established the fact that God is an unchangeable being, we certainly must come to this conclusion, that whatever He required a sinner to do to be saved in the days of Christ and the Apostles, He requires now; and the same blessings He promised then to the obedient, He promises now. Well, as God is unchangeable, and as the Apostles and Christ preached the same Gospel, and the Gospel they preached God approbated; we, professing to be ministers of the Gospel, are bound to look and see what Christ and the Apostles preached, and must preach the same, or come under a curse.

Now for the examination. In reading the New Testament, we find the first thing that Christ and the Apostles tried to impress on their hearers, was, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. On the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," the Jews said, "These men are full of new wine." Peter stood up in their midst and endeavoured to prove that Christ is the Saviour of the world. He said, "Therefore, let all the house of Israël know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."—Acts ii. 36.

Again. In Matt. i. 21: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." Jesus says in Luke xix. 10: "For the Son of Man is come to seek, and to save that which was lost."

Peter, in speaking of Christ, says—"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—Acts iv. 12. Many other passages might be adduced to prove, that Christ and the Apostles endeavoured to show to the people in their days, that Jesus is the Saviour of the world; but enough has been

pointed out to prove to us, if we undertake to preach, we must do the same, or come under a curse.

Having convinced the people that Christ is the Saviour of the world, what next must we preach? Let us examine and see. After Peter had convinced his hearers that they must believe on the Lord Jesus to obtain salvation, "they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—Acts. ii. 37. What did Peter tell them? Did he tell them to come to the anxious seat and be prayed for? No. Did he tell them to go home and pray and try to get religion? No. Did he tell them to give themselves away to Christ? No. Did he tell them that mere faith on the Lord Jesus would save them? No,—we find he told them none of these things. What did he tell them? We will read his own words: "Then Peter said unto them, repent."—Acts ii. 38.

We find John the Baptist, in Matt. iii. 2, calling upon the people to "repent;" also in chap. iv. 17, we read: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say—repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The twelve Apostles, when they were sent out by Christ, "preached that men should repent."—Mark vi. 12. Paul, while preaching to the men of Athens, said: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."—Acts xvii. 30.

In reading the New Testament, we can find numerous passages where Christ and His Apostles preached repentance.

If we would be to the trouble of reading the 15th verse of the 1st Chapter of Mark, and the 3rd and 5th verses of the xiii chapter of Luke, we there find Christ calling upon the people to "repent," also by reading the 19th verse of the iii Chapter of Acts, we find Peter doing the same.

Paul, while making his defence before King Agrippa, said, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first

unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”—Acts xxvi. 19, 20.

We now, by examination, have found that Christ and his Apostles, in all their preaching, taught these two principles or doctrines: viz., 1st, that Christ is the Saviour of the world; and 2nd, that men every where must repent. So we see if we undertake to preach, we must preach the same, or, according to the words of Paul, “be accursed.” We will now pursue our examination further, and see if there is anything more for us to preach.

By reading, we understand that Peter, after he had convinced his hearers that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and had called upon them to repent, told them they had something more to do. What was it? “And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.” Be baptized, Peter? What for? “FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.”

We will examine a little further, and see if Christ and the rest of the Apostles, taught the doctrine of baptism.

Jesus, just before he ascended into heaven, said unto his disciples, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. xxviii. 19. Paul, at the time of his conversion, arose and was baptized. While relating this circumstance afterwards, he speaks of Ananias, saying unto him, “And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts. xxii. 16. Peter taught the doctrine of baptism to Cornelius; and notwithstanding Cornelius was a man that feared God, and blest with a vision of an angel, yet, he had to send for Peter to tell him what to do; and one great principle Peter taught him was, that he must be baptized. In Samaria, as soon as they believed Philip’s preaching, “they were baptized, both men and women.” The jailor “and all his,” in believing what Paul and Silas

taught them, were immediately baptized. In reading the Acts of the Apostles, we find wherever they preached, as soon as the people believed and repented, they were baptized.

It is evident by the New Testament, that there are two distinct baptisms; one of water, and one of the Holy Ghost. As the passages I have referred to, have reference more particularly to the baptism of water, and as there are a number of different water baptisms, practised by Christendom, let us first look and see what kind of water baptism Christ and the Apostles taught and practised, leaving the baptism of the Holy Ghost till we have settled this point.

We read that John the Baptist, baptized in Jordan. Likewise Christ who every where is spoken of in Scripture as our Pattern, came to John and was baptized; "and Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." Matt. iii. 16. From this we would naturally learn, that He went down into the water, and had something more done to Him than merely to have water sprinkled or poured on Him. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. I do not see, brother, how a man can be born of an element, without first being enveloped or covered in that element. It appears that Christ not only was baptized Himself by being covered in the water, but taught it to others. We will now see if the Apostles taught the same.

Paul, in his Epistles to the Romans and Colossians, speaks of being buried with Christ in baptism. We read in the viii Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that the Ethiopian Eunuch, as soon as he was convinced that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, wished to be baptized; and that he and Philip both went down into the water, and Philip there baptized him; after which, they came "up out of the water."

In the iii Chapter and 23rd verse of the gospel of John, it reads thus, "And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there;

and they came, and were baptized." Now if John baptized in any other way than by immersion, I cannot see why it was necessary for him to be where there was much water in order to do it. We now have found by examination, that Christ and His Apostles preached, taught, and practised water baptism "for the remission of sins," or to "wash away sins," and that this baptism was performed by immersion, or, covering the individual baptised, in water.

We will still pursue our examination, and see if we can get an understanding of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, promised all who would repent and be baptized, "the gift of the Holy Ghost." By what Christ told Nicodemus, we certainly understand that a man must be born of the Spirit, as well as of the water, to enter the kingdom of God. John the Baptist told the Jews, speaking of Jesus, that "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Christ promised His disciples, that after He left, the Father would send them the "Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost." Just before He did leave, He said unto them, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke xxiv. 49. This injunction they obeyed, waiting in Jerusalem till the day of Pentecost, when they were "endued with power from on high," being "filled with the Holy Ghost."

The Apostles having now full power to go forth and proclaim salvation, and officiate in all the ordinances necessary for the same; let us see in what way they gave the Holy Ghost to those that believed. We find by what Peter said, that those who would repent and be baptized, had a right to expect the "gift of the Holy Ghost:" not only those to whom he was then speaking, but *all*, for he says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."—Acts ii. 39.

When Peter and John visited those that had been

baptized in Samaria, we read, "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Acts. viii. 15—17.

Paul, when he went to Ephesus, found certain disciples that had been baptized "unto John's baptism." He told them to believe "on Christ Jesus." "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them." Acts xix. 5, 6. Paul also speaks, in Hebrews, "of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands."

We now have found by examination, that Christ and the Apostles taught the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that the Apostles gave the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands; for we read in Acts viii. 18, 19, "And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, give me also this power, that, on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

But Peter told him, that it was the "gift of God;" or in other words, it is the power that God giveth to those who have a right to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel.

We now, by our researches, have found we must preach the following doctrines: 1st, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; 2nd, Repentance; 3rd, The baptism of water by immersion; 4th, The Baptism of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands. We have already seen that baptism by water, brings the remission of sins, and the promise of the "gift of the Holy Ghost," which the sinner is entitled to, by the laying on of hands, as soon as he has repented and been baptized "for the remission of sins."

Having thus got the sinner in the road to salvation, his sins remitted, and in possession of the Holy Ghost; let us examine and see if we can promise him any bless-

ings, that will be a comfort to him as he travels through this world of sin and sorrow, or in other words, let us see if Christ and his Apostles promised any. If they did, we must, or "be accursed."

After Christ's resurrection from the dead, He appeared unto his disciples, "And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."—Mark. xvi. 15—18. Glorious promises! Christ not only promises eternal salvation to those who believe the gospel and are baptized, but He promises other blessings; blessings that are to be realized in this life, which will be to the poor pilgrim to eternity, like a cup of cold water to the weary and thirsty traveller, and like a cooling shade at mid-day, defending him from the scorching rays of the burning sun.

In reading the xiv, xv, and xvi. chapters of St. John, we find Christ promised His disciples, that after He left them, He would send them the Holy Ghost, which should "guide them into all truth," "shew" them "things to come," "teach" them "all things, and bring all things to" their "remembrance, whatsoever" He had "said unto" them.

Now, as the Holy Ghost is the same wherever it is found, and Peter promised the "gift of the Holy Ghost" to all who would "repent and be baptized," it becomes our duty, as ministers of the gospel, to promise those that repent and are baptized, and have received the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands; if they will live so as to retain the Holy Ghost after having received it, that they shall be guided "into all truth," be taught all things, and be shown things to come. What promises to poor mortals! Praise the Lord, O my soul, for thou hast promised me, that if I will obey

thy commands, I shall be guided "into ALL TRUTH" and even have the spirit of prophecy on me, so that I can know what thou art about to bring up^{on} the earth, even as thy ancient prophets knew; for we read in 2 Peter i. 21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

We find by reading the Acts of the Apostles, that the blessings which Christ promised, did follow those that believed and were baptized, that the Holy Ghost did rest down upon all that obeyed the gospel, that they spoke with tongues and prophesied; and the sick were healed. We find the Apostles preached the same doctrine they received from Christ, in promising the same blessings to all who would believe in the gospel and comply with its requirements.

Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthian Church, Chapter xiv. verse 1st, says: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." He then goes on to tell them how to manage these "spiritual gifts," and in the 39th verse, he says: "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophecy, and forbid not to speak with tongues." James says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

Brother, do we preach these doctrines? Do we tell the believer that he must "covet to prophesy and forbid not to speak with tongues?" Do we tell him if he is sick "to call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord," instead of sending for the doctor to give him some medicine in the name of his great skill and learning? If we do not teach these things, also faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism "for the remission of sins," laying on of hands for the "gift of the Holy Ghost;" let us pause and read the words of Paul to the Galatians: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto

you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Jude, in speaking "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called;" says—"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Do we teach this doctrine to them who have a hope that they have "passed from death unto life;" and that it is their privilege and prerogative to enjoy it? What was the "faith once delivered unto the saints?" Paul has told us in the xi chap. of Hebrews. We can also read it for ourselves in the Old as well as in the New Testament, and there see what great and mighty miracles were performed, and blessings enjoyed by the ancient saints through their faith; and Jude tells us to "contend" for this very faith. It would have been very foolish for him to instruct us to "contend" for something that is not our privilege to enjoy. We then find that there are great blessings promised the true believers in this world, as well as in the world to come; and we, as ministers of the Gospel, are in duty bound to preach them, and present them before the saints of God; telling the saints these blessings are for them, to comfort, cheer, and console them as they pass through this world of sin and sorrow. These blessings to the children of God, as they pass through this wilderness world on their way to celestial glory, are like fruitful spots in a barren desert to weary travellers.

Having found what kind of blessings the obeyers of the gospel are entitled too, let us examine and see if we can ascertain what kind of a Church we must introduce them into, for, if we pretend to be ministers of the gospel, having power and authority to direct and guide weary pilgrims to eternity; it is very essential we should understand this, if we do not, we might direct them wrong, and thereby bring a curse upon ourselves.

Paul, in the xii Chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, has plainly told us what kind of a Church is the true Church. He compares the Church of Christ to the human body; and as every part or member of the

body must be connected with the body, in order to make a perfect body ; so must all the gifts of the gospel, and the officers he speaks of in that Chapter, be in the Church, to make it a true Church, or the Church of Christ ; and as one member of the body cannot say to another member, " I have no need of thee," so, in like manner, neither can one officer in the Church say to another officer, " I have no need of thee," or one who has one gift, say to one that has another gift, " I have no need of thee," for they are all necessary to make a true and perfect Church, as much so, as every member of the body must be connected with the body, to make a perfect or whole body. In the 4th verse of this Chapter, Paul says, " Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." In the 8th, 9th and 10th verses he says, " For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of Spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues." We perceive these are all done by the same Spirit.

Now, according to Paul's explanation, he that hath the " word of wisdom," " cannot," or must not, " say unto " him that hath " the word of knowledge," " I have no need of thee." Neither he that hath " the word of knowledge," " say unto " him that hath " faith," " I have no need of thee," also he that " faith," " cannot say unto " him that worketh " miracles," " I have no need of thee," or the worker of " miracles " to him that hath the gift of " prophecy," " I have no need of thee," and so on through all the gifts ; for they are all necessary in the Church, and must exist in the true Church of Christ. Again, the first Officers Paul says God places in the Church, are " Apostles," the second " Prophets," and the third, " Teachers." As with the gifts, so with the Officers. An Apostle " cannot say unto " a Prophet, " I have no need of thee," or a Prophet to a Teacher, " I have no need of thee," like-

wise *vice versa*. If God has placed in the Church Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, &c., who has a right to say they shall not be there?

In the iv Chapter of Ephesians, Paul, in speaking of Christ, says, "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." What gifts, Paul? "And he gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." What for? "For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (or the Church of Christ). Paul, how long are these gifts to continue in the Church? "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." But Paul, what is the use of these gifts? "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." The Apostle here is very explicit, and clearly shows who gave these gifts, how long they are to continue in the Church, and why they are to continue. Brother, if Christ has given these gifts, have we any right to reject them? May we not as well reject Him, as reject the gifts and blessings He has offered us?

In 1st Corinthians, Chapter xiii, 8th, 9th and 10th verses, we read "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." This perfectly agrees with what Paul says in the iv Chapter of Ephesians; showing that these gifts will not be done away till "that which is perfect is come," or "till we all come in the unity of the faith." "Charity" which is the "pure love of Christ," "never faileth," but all these other gifts and blessings of the gospel, are to be done away. When are they to be done away?

“When that which is perfect is come.” When we shall know as we are known, see as we are seen—know and comprehend God as He knows and comprehends us.—Then we shall have no need of prophecies, tongues, &c.; but till then, they are necessary “for the perfecting of the Saints,” for fitting and preparing them to inherit a Celestial glory in the Celestial kingdom of God.

Brother, we have now briefly examined, and have found what kind of a gospel Christ and His Apostles preached; also what kind of Church, the Church of Christ is, as laid down in the New Testament. Let us now pause, and ask ourselves, Do we preach the same gospel? Do we tell sinners they must believe on the Lord Jesus—repent of all their sins, and be baptized in water, by immersion for the remission of them? If they will do this, do we promise them the “gift of the Holy Ghost,” by the laying on of hands? Do we tell them that after they have received this Holy Ghost it will “guide” them “into all truth,”—“shew” them “things to come,”—give them the spirit of prophecy like unto the ancient prophets—cause them to speak with tongues—give them power to heal the sick and perform many miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, as the ancient Prophets and Apostles did? If we do not teach these doctrines, brother, we are still “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity,” “blind leaders of the blind,” and unless we speedily repent, the curse of Jehovah will rest upon us.

Are Again, is there in the Church to which we belong, and into which we invite them that have repented of their sins, Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, &c.? Do we belong to a Church, in which are all the gifts of the gospel, such as the gift of prophecy, gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues, gift of healing, miracles, &c.? If we do not, we have not yet found the true Church, for, as we have seen by our examination, all these gifts are in the Church of Christ, and if they are not in the Church to which we belong, we are not in the Church of Christ, but the Church of the Devil, and are his

children ; and if we do not repent, and get baptized for the remission of our sins, he will claim us as his own at the Day of Judgment.

O the responsibility ! the GREAT responsibility, resting upon us as ministers of the gospel !

Brother, if we have received the "gift of the Holy Ghost" by the laying on of hands, we *cannot* be at a loss to know whether we are preaching the very gospel that Christ and His Apostles preached ; for the Holy Ghost will lead and "guide" us "into all truth." But if we have not yet received the "gift of the Holy Ghost," we have great reason to fear and tremble. Tremble for fear that we may be preaching a different gospel than what Christ and the Apostles preached, and thereby incur the curse spoken of by Paul.

Hundreds and thousands pretend to preach the gospel of Christ, but they have only the "form of godliness, denying the power thereof"—denying all the spiritual gifts which the Apostle Paul says, *shall continue* in the Church, till that "which is perfect is come."—Their "feet go down to death ;" their "steps take hold on hell." God "will laugh at" their "calamity," and "mock when" their "fear cometh."

Many it is feared preach "for hire" and "divine for money," and are the hirelings which Christ speaks of, that "careth not for the sheep," only to get their fleeces.

Brother, I must close. May the Spirit of Isreal's God rest down upon you, and direct you in the right way. May you examine the course you are pursuing—the gospel you are preaching ; and so run that you may at last win the prize, is the prayer of your affectionate brother ;

JESSE HAVEN.

[1000 copies printed for circulation.]